

NEW JERSEY

TRAVEL & TOURISM

NEW JERSEY COMMERCE & ECONOMIC GROWTH COMMISSION

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New Jersey Lighthouse Guide



Call 1-800 VISIT NJ, ext. 0923, for your free Travel Guide
www.visitnj.org

New Jersey Lighthouses



1. Robbin's Reef Lighthouse
2. Romer Shoal Lighthouse
3. Great Beds Lighthouse
4. Conover Beacon
5. Chapel Hill Lighthouse
6. Sandy Hook Lighthouse♦
7. Twin Lights of Navesink♦
8. Sea Girt Lighthouse
9. Barnegat Lighthouse♦
10. Absecon Lighthouse
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♦On New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail



Governor James E. McGreevey and Mrs. Dina Matos McGreevey with their daughter Jacqueline at the Jersey Shore.

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New Jersey's lighthouses are majestic beacons, silent sentinels that guard time and mariners alike. It's a testament to the craftsmanship of their construction that so many lighthouses survive today, after years of fighting the awe-inspiring force of the sea. Each one that remains tells its own fascinating tale of bygone seafarers and the dangers they faced.

As you plan your next vacation, remember to discover New Jersey's lighthouses. Those open to the public are located in some of the most beautiful and adventurous settings you'll ever visit. Put them on your travel itinerary and you'll agree....New Jersey's lighthouses are still a Must-See!



♦The Coastal Heritage Trail

The trail recognizes the importance of the state's coastal area in our nation's history. Seven lighthouses have been designated as trail route destinations. For information and maps, call (856) 447-0103 or visit the website at www.nps.gov/neje

East Point Lighthouse

Lighthouses are many things to many people. To some, they are the seaside sentinels of a bygone era, idyllic landmarks set on picturesque beaches and bluffs. To others, they are a guiding light offering hope and comfort miles out on an often treacherous sea. But no matter what view you hold, everyone agrees on one thing: Lighthouses are simply magical!

Absecon Lighthouse

Like saltwater taffy and the world-famous Atlantic City Boardwalk and piers, the Absecon Lighthouse is one of Greater Atlantic City's most popular attractions. This statuesque 171-foot tower with its distinctive yellow and black color scheme has been the "sister" of Barnegat Lighthouse for more than 140 years. After it was built in 1857 to mark the dangerous shoals of Absecon and



Brigantine, it immediately attracted thousands of visitors to climb its 228 steps. The majestic tower still retains its original first-order* Fresnel (Fray•nel) lens, the only New Jersey light to do so. Open Thurs.-Mon.

11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sept.-June and daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. July and August. Admission fee: \$5 adults; \$2 children 4-12; \$4 seniors; children under 4 are free. Call for winter and holiday hours. Corner of Pacific and Rhode Island in Atlantic City. (609) 441-9272.

Cape May Lighthouse♦

A visit to historic Victorian Cape May becomes even more memorable once you stop at the lighthouse out on Cape May Point State Park. Towering 157½ feet above the southernmost tip of the state, its distinctive beam flashes once every 15 seconds and is visible 24 miles out at sea. Built in 1859 under the supervision of First



Lieutenant George Meade, the original lens was so large the keeper actually stood inside it when refueling. Nearby at the Cape May Courthouse Museum, the Fresnel lens specified by Meade is on display.

Most of the state park, about 190 acres, is a natural area where visitors can observe migrating birds and butterflies. There are also three miles of hiking trails, surf fishing, and picnic areas. Open daily 8 a.m.-4 p.m. May-Nov., weekends Dec.-April. Admission fee: \$5 adults, \$1 children 3-12. (609) 884-5404.



Hereford Inlet Lighthouse♦

If not for the light standing tall above its Victorian architecture, you might mistake the Hereford Inlet Lighthouse for a prime vacation home. Built in 1874, this lighthouse was one of the more well-appointed along the Jersey Shore, featuring five fireplaces and beautiful living quarters for the keeper and his family. Outside, you can see the lovely garden of flowers and herbs that invites passersby. Hereford Inlet Lighthouse now offers a small museum and is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. (609) 522-4520. 111 North Central Avenue, North Wildwood. Open daily 9 a.m.-5 p.m. mid May-mid Oct. Call for winter hours. Admission fee: \$4 adults; \$1 children under 12; \$1.50 children 12-17.

* The Fresnel lens came in six different sizes; first order being the largest, sixth order the smallest.

♦ On New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail.

Brandywine Shoal Lighthouse

Built on a caisson of reinforced concrete, the lighthouse remaining today was constructed in 1914. Its predecessor was built in 1850, and was the first in the United States constructed on screw piles—auger-tipped metal pilings that were screwed into the sandy bottom of Delaware Bay to form a foundation. Maintained by the Coast Guard.

Closed to the public.

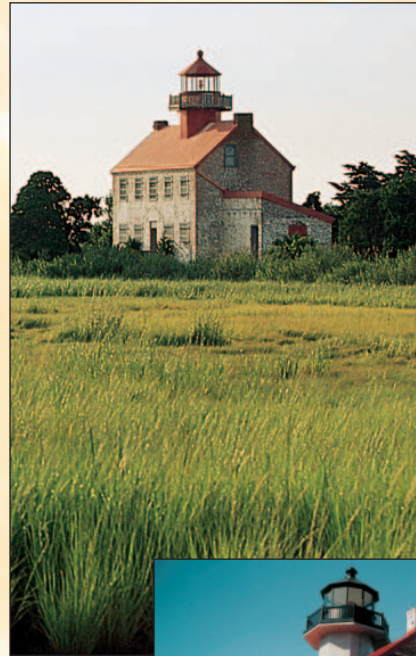


Carole F. Reilly, "The Lighthouse Lady"

East Point Lighthouse♦

Standing alone in a picturesque setting on the shore of Delaware Bay, marking the mouth of the Maurice River and miles from any developed lands, East Point Lighthouse has guided commercial fishermen and pleasure boaters since 1849. Its distinctive "Cape Cod" features were the inspiration for many of the early lighthouses built on the Pacific Coast. The two-story red brick structure is painted white and is topped by a rutilant roof and lantern. Group tours may be arranged. (856) 327-3714. East Point Road off State Highway 47, Heislerville. Grounds open. Lighthouse interior undergoing restoration. Call for hours of operation. For

information, contact Maurice River Historical Society, 210 North High Street, Millville. Free admission.



Carole F. Reilly, "The Lighthouse Lady"

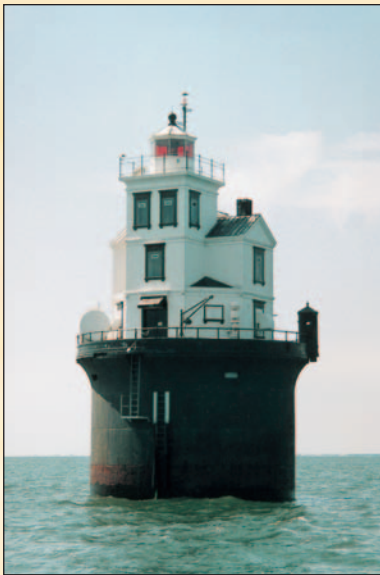
Renovated exterior, East Point Lighthouse.

Elbow of Cross Ledge Lighthouse

As if gusting winds, salt spray, and rolling swells of seawater aren't enough to erode the construction of a lighthouse, there is also the hazard of ships colliding with the structure. The light at the Elbow of Cross Ledge has had more than its share of such run-ins. Until 1951 when the lighthouse was abandoned for good during a hurricane, its four-man crew routinely slept in lifejackets because of frequent jolts from passing ships. The final blow was struck in 1953 when a freighter loaded with ore finished off the original red brick dwelling, leaving only the base of the structure and the bottom 10 feet of the light. In 1954, an automated light mounted on top of a steel skeleton was built to replace the damaged structure. Maintained by the Coast Guard. *Closed to the public.*

Fourteen Foot Bank Lighthouse

Victorian architecture in New Jersey doesn't end at the tip of Cape May. Thirteen miles out at sea, on the western side of the shipping channel, the keeper's quarters of Fourteen Foot Bank Lighthouse reflect the Victorian era with its quaint three-story structure and "hip-roof" privy set atop a caisson base. The light was outfitted with a fourth-order Fresnel lens and was first lit on December 1, 1886. Unmanned since 1972, the light remains a key directional aid for ships passing through Delaware Bay. Maintained by the Coast Guard. *Closed to the public.*



Carol F. Reilly, "The Lighthouse Lady"

Carol F. Reilly, "The Lighthouse Lady"



Miah Maull Shoal Lighthouse

So how did this lighthouse come by its very unusual name? Legend has it that a late-18th-century man named Nehemiah Maull drowned in a shipwreck near the site of the present lighthouse. In 1909, a temporary light shone from the cast iron foundation shell and in 1913, the permanent light was exhibited for the first time from its fourth-order lens. Miah Maull has shown the way for thousands of seafarers and today remains an active aid to navigation, as well as a favorite fishing spot. Maintained by the Coast Guard. *Closed to the public.*



Carole F. Reilly, "The Lighthouse Lady"

Ship John Shoal Lighthouse

When the *Ship John* crashed on this shoal and sank off the mouth of the Cohansey River in 1787, vessels from nearby Greenwich, New Jersey, rushed into the waters and saved all 60 German passengers and the captain. Built in 1877, the storybook Second Empire Victorian-style cottage that sits atop this lighthouse features a quaint copper roof and paned windows. The frame of the ship's rudder, which was retrieved many years later by an oyster dredge, is on display at the Cape May Historical Society Museum in Cape May Court House. Maintained by the Coast Guard. *Closed to the public.*

Tinicum Rear Range Lighthouse

First lit on New Year's Eve in 1880, this light pairs with the Tinicum Front Range Light to serve as a key guide for ships heading north along the Delaware River toward Philadelphia. Its fixed red light and 1,000 watt lamps exhibit 500,000 candlepower from atop an 85-foot-high tower. Located on the corner of Mantua and Second Streets in Paulsboro. (856) 423-1505 or (856) 423-2545. Open the third weekend of each month April-Oct. Sat. 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Sun. noon-4 p.m. Free admission: \$2 donation requested.

Robbin's Reef Lighthouse

In the shadows of Lady Liberty in New York Harbor, on a tiny islet about two miles southwest of the Statue, a single mother, standing no more than 4' 10" tall, quietly reigned as the first lady of the harbor at the turn of the last century. Robbin's Reef Lighthouse takes its nickname "Kate's Light" from Kate Walker, who began living at the station in the 1880s. After her husband Jacob's death in 1890, Kate tended the light herself, rowing her children to school on Staten Island each day. During her 33 years at this busy station she was credited with saving more than 50 lives in New York Harbor. Maintained by the Coast Guard. *Closed to the public.*

During her tenure as lighthouse keeper on Robbin's Reef, Kate Walker saved dozens of lives. Among these were five men who were tossed into the sea when their schooner crashed onto a reef one cold winter night. Kate boarded her rowboat and proceeded to rescue all five as well as a small Scottish terrier that she warmed with a towel and sips of warm coffee. In 1919, she retired from her post at the age of 71.

Great Beds Lighthouse

As navigational aids, lighthouses have saved immeasurable costs in merchandise and lives over the years. Off-shore beacons such as Great Beds have played a crucial role in alerting navigators to the hazards that lurk beneath the surface of the water. Located a half-mile from the wetlands of South Amboy in a shallow area near the mouth of the Raritan River, this stark white 42-foot tower is actually put together from five separate sections. It was built in 1880 to replace a deteriorated lightship that had marked the shallow hazard since 1840. Maintained by the Coast Guard. *Closed to the public.*

Chapel Hill Lighthouse

The Chapel Hill Lighthouse was erected in 1856 and named after a tiny nearby church. When operational, it was paired with the Conover Beacon, located about one and a half miles north on Leonardo Beach. The two lighthouses marked the key Chapel Hill channel into Sandy Hook Bay. The Chapel Hill Lighthouse was built to an elevation of 224 feet above sea level and featured two chimneys on both ends that flanked its square central tower. It was the last wooden rear range light of its kind in New Jersey. It was decommissioned in the 1940s and replaced by an automated tower. It is now a private residence. *Closed to the public.*

Conover Beacon

The original 1856 structure situated on the beach was paired with Chapel Hill Beacon to mark what was known as the Chapel Hill Channel. Interestingly, that wooden tower was toppled in 1940 and replaced with the present open-frame metal structure, originally called Bayside Beacon when located in Keansburg along Roop Avenue in Middletown Township. *Closed to the public.*

Major General George Meade

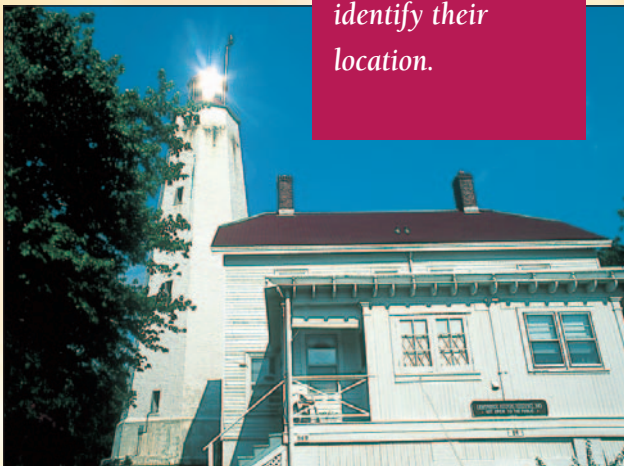
Engineer and Civil War Hero

Before commanding the Army of the Potomac at the Battle of Gettysburg, George Meade was in charge of construction for three of New Jersey's most famous lighthouses: Absecon, Barnegat, and Cape May.

Romer Shoal Lighthouse

The shoal and lighthouse are named for the *William J. Romer*, a vessel which sank here in 1863. Both are located in the approach to the Verrazano Narrows of New York Harbor on the east side of what is known as Ambrose Channel. It is visible from Atlantic Highlands. The maroon and white harbor beacon dates to 1898. Maintained by the Coast Guard. *Closed to the public.*

Each lighthouse has its own coded flash sequence by night and a distinctive daytime design or mark, making it easier for navigators to identify their location.

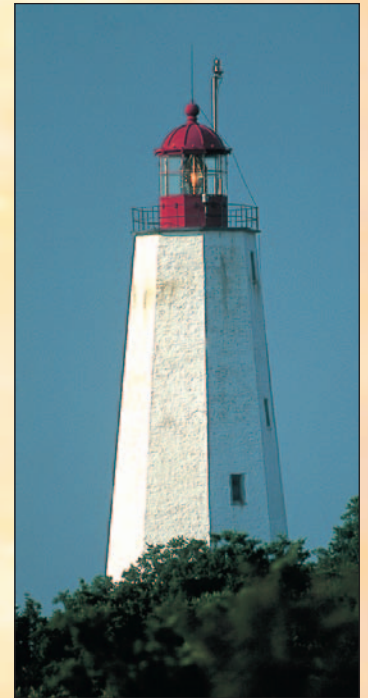


Sandy Hook Lighthouse♦

The Sandy Hook Lighthouse is the oldest operating lighthouse in the United States. It is located at the northern end of the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area in Atlantic Highlands. Amazingly well preserved, this unique octagonal tower dates back to the 18th century and has been in service since 1764. Except for being darkened during the Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II, the beacon has been operating ever since. The National Park Service owns the tower. The Coast Guard maintains the light.

The lighthouse is open to the public weekends April-Nov., noon-4 p.m. Tours and talks are presented by members of the New Jersey Lighthouse Society. Call the Visitor's Center for more information. (732) 872-5970. Free admission.

The lighthouse is on the grounds of Fort Hancock and is just one of the unbeatable tourist attractions at Sandy Hook. The peninsula also boasts a spectacular holly forest, excellent surf fishing, hiking, beaches, trails, salt marshes, and over 300 species of birds.





Sea Girt Lighthouse

Nestled within an L-shaped Victorian building, the Sea Girt Lighthouse first shone in 1896. Like most lighthouses of the day, its “fourth-order” Fresnel lens revolved on ballbearings driven by complex clockworks. With just one winding, the light turned for 7½ hours, turning red for two seconds out of six. Originally built to bridge the 40-mile gap between Barnegat Light and the Twin Lights of Navesink, this square red brick tower attached to a keeper’s dwelling was decommissioned in 1945. The interior of the lighthouse has been meticulously restored by a local citizens’ committee and furnished in keeping with its historical period. (732) 974-0514. Located on Beacon Boulevard and The Ocean, Sea Girt. Open Sundays 2 p.m.-4 p.m. for tours. Free admission.



The Fresnel lens was first used in the United States in 1841 at Navesink Light Station.

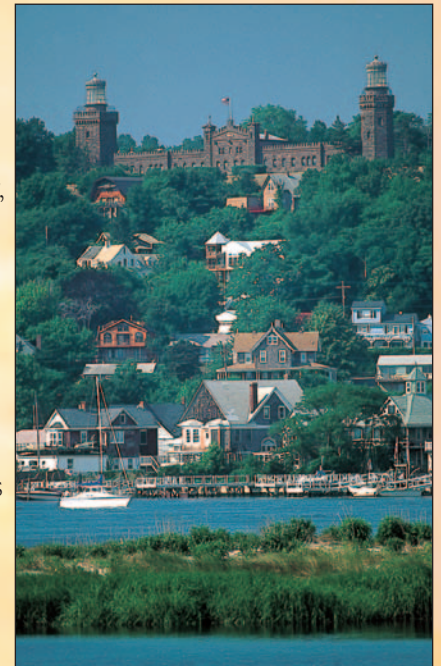
It resembled a huge beehive of glass surrounding a lamp, whose light was reflected by prisms at the top and bottom.

Twin Lights of Navesink♦

When Henry Hudson first saw the “high hills” here in 1609, he described them as being “a very good land to fall with and a pleasant land to see.” Indeed, there are many “firsts” associated with the Twin Lights, which tower 250 feet above Sandy Hook Bay, on one of the highest points along the coast. This is where the United States’ first Fresnel lens was located; Guglielmo Marconi demonstrated the first practical use of the wireless telegraph from Navesink in 1899; the first lamps to be fueled by kerosene were used here in 1883; and in 1898 it was one of the first electrically lit seacoast lighthouses in the country. The present day brownstone double lighthouses were built in 1862 on the site of the original 1828 Navesink Lighthouses.

Decommissioned in 1949, the handsome building today houses a museum of lighthouse and life-saving station artifacts offering films and slide shows. Spectacular views are available from atop the medieval-style towers.

Located in Highlands, it is open daily 10 a.m.-5 p.m. during the summer, and Wed.-Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. the rest of the year. (732) 872-1814. Lighthouse Road off Route 36, Highlands. Exhibits and gift shop are accessible to the disabled. Donation requested.





Barnegat Lighthouse♦

With a pair of comfortable shoes and just a little bit of nerve, a trip up the 217-step winding staircase of “Old Barney” is well worth the 10-15 minute climb. The view from the top is spectacular, with breathtaking Island Beach State Park to the north, the 18 miles of Long Beach Island to the south, and a bird’s-eye view of Barnegat Inlet from every angle! This handsome 165-foot red and white tower, which was used as a lookout during WW I, was restored to its original splendor in 1988 and remains a symbol of the state’s proud maritime heritage. The original 40-foot lighthouse was built in 1835 to mark a hazardous shoal as well as the fortieth parallel, a point crucial to transatlantic navigation. Its beehive-shaped Fresnel lens can be viewed at the nearby Barnegat Lighthouse Museum. Six feet in diameter, the 12-foot-high lens is formed from 1,024 separate prisms mounted in bronze fittings. Listed on the

State and National Registers of Historic Places, the lighthouse is open year-round. (609) 494-2016. Barnegat Lighthouse State Park, Barnegat Light, Long Beach Island. Open May-Sept. 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. daily. Admission fee \$1, 12 and older. Oct.-April, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Admission free.



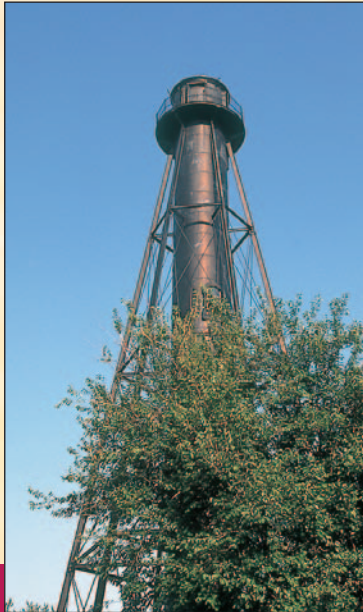
Tucker’s Island Light

Be sure and visit Tucker’s Island Light, a re-creation of an Atlantic Ocean lighthouse that fell into the sea in 1927 after years of pounding surf and beach erosion. Originally erected in 1848, the re-created lighthouse now stands in Tuckerton Seaport, serving as a maritime interpretive center. It houses exhibits telling the history of the U.S. Lifesaving Service, Barnegat Bay pirates and the bay itself. Tuckerton Seaport is a newly re-created working maritime village, celebrating the legacy of the Jersey Shore, and is located on 40 acres on Tuckerton Creek. Open daily 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission fee: \$6 adults; \$4 seniors 62 and older; \$3 children 6-17; children five and under free. (609) 296-8868. www.tuckertonseaport.org

Finns Point Rear Range Light♦

Originally constructed in Buffalo, New York, and then moved here by train and mule-wagon, this unusual wrought iron open-frame lighthouse was built at a cost of \$1,200 in 1876. Standing 115-feet-tall, when operational, it featured a 24-inch range lens with double wick burner and kerosene vapor lamp emitting 150,000 candlepower. Close by is Fort Mott State Park, a 104-acre waterfront park with buildings and gun emplacements from the Spanish-American War. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Open every third Sunday April-Sept. noon to 4 p.m. 197 Lighthouse Road, Pennsville. (856) 935-1487. Free admission.

♦ On New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail.



A Lightkeeper's Duty

Twice a day, once in the morning to extinguish the flame and once again in the evening to light it, the lighthouse keeper had to scale the 130 steps of Finns Point Lighthouse.

*Learn more about New Jersey's Lighthouses.
Visit the website of the New Jersey Lighthouse
Society at <http://njlhs.burlco.org>.
Or write, New Jersey Lighthouse Society,
P.O. Box 332, Navesink, NJ 07752*

New Jersey Lighthouse "Firsts"

- 1823 The *Sandy Hook Lightship* becomes the first outside lightship in the United States.
- 1841 Navesink Twin Lights becomes the first lighthouse in the New World to be equipped with a Fresnel lens.
- 1850 The Brandywine Shoal Lighthouse becomes the first completed lighthouse in the country built on a screwpile foundation.
- 1868 Sandy Hook East Beacon becomes the first lighthouse in the country to be equipped with a steam driven fog siren.
- 1883 Navesink Twin Lights becomes the initial first-order lighthouse to use mineral oil (kerosene) for fuel.
- 1889 The Sandy Hook Lighthouse becomes the first lighthouse in the U.S. to use the incandescent lamp.
- 1899 The first wireless (radio) messages to be sent and received in the U.S. were exchanged between operators aboard the *S.S. Ponce* and *Twin Lights*.
- 1903 Compressed acetylene dissolved in acetone was first used as fuel at the Sandy Hook South Beacon and Jones Rock Beacon, Connecticut.
- 1921 The Sea Girt Lighthouse and *Ambrose Lightship* became the first stations to use a radio fog beacon. A device was also installed aboard the *Fire Island Lightship*.
- 1934 The Cape May Lighthouse becomes the first lighthouse in the country to be illuminated by a sodium vapor lamp.

Courtesy New Jersey Lighthouse Society
<http://njlhs.burlco.org>